



CITY NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**** Media Advisory ****

Traffic Safety During the Holidays a priority for Wichita Police

Keeping citizens and visitors safe on Wichita streets during the holiday season will be a priority for the Wichita Police Department, according to Deputy Chief of Field Services Tom Stolz.

Each year between the months of November and January, Wichita averages around 3,600 vehicle accidents with approximately three percent of those being drug/alcohol related. The remaining 97 percent of those accidents are due to factors such as speeding, failing to yield the right-of-way, inattentive driving and running stop signs/traffic lights.

During the first 10 months of 2005, Wichita recorded 22 traffic fatalities, of which 10 (45 percent) were drug and alcohol related.

"The holidays always bring more traffic as our citizens are busy shopping and visiting friends and family. We also have increased traffic due to the out of town guests visiting Wichita during the holidays," said Deputy Chief Stolz. "The Wichita Police Department is committed to keeping our city streets as safe as possible, so we will be conducting a number of special traffic projects in addition to our routine enforcement during the holidays."

Officers will be very visible during the holidays and want to remind citizens to wear their seat belts and don't drink and drive.

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Some of the special traffic safety enforcement activities that will occur between Nov. 21 and Nov. 27 include:

Patrol North: On Wednesday, Nov. 23, Officers will be conducting a DUI saturation patrol with efforts focused in the area from Central to 29th St. North and I135 to Amidon. Officers participating in this enforcement activity will be driving marked police cars with a DUI Task Force sign on the vehicle. Motorists who are suspected of driving under the influence will be pulled over and given a field sobriety test, which may be followed by a Breath Alcohol Test. Those drivers found to be over the legal limit of .08 will be arrested.

Throughout the holidays, Officers will be watching for moving violations and seat belt violations near high accident intersections.

On Saturday, Nov. 26, Officers will conduct a DUI check lane on Rock Road between 13th St. North and Rockhill. This will be a combined effort between the Patrol North and Patrol East Bureaus, WPD Reserves and Kansas Highway Patrol. Drivers who approach the lane should be prepared to present their driver's license and proof of insurance. Any drivers who cannot produce these items, or who are suspected of driving under the influence, will be asked to pull over into another lane.

The Wichita Police Department will have a supervisor routinely monitoring the length of time it takes a motorist to proceed through the check lane when no violations have been detected. This process should take no more than five minutes.

If police suspect a person of DUI, and he/she refuses to submit to a sobriety test, he/she is subject to having their driver's license suspended for a year. Fines for Driving Under the Influence are progressive for each subsequent conviction and can result in a felony crime and imprisonment. The legal limit in the State of Kansas for adults is .08 percent Blood Alcohol Content. Those drivers under 21 years of age cannot have a blood alcohol content of more than .02 percent.

Patrol West: Officers will be monitoring the two largest thoroughfares in this Bureau: West Kellogg and West 21st Street. They will be watching for speeders and other traffic violations that lead to accidents, especially on Wednesday, Nov. 23, which is the busiest travel day of the year.

They will also be conducting DUI saturation patrols over the holiday weekend.

Patrol East: On Nov. 23 and 25, two of the busiest shopping days of the year, Officers will be focusing their efforts on speeding and turn violations. Officers will also be paying close attention to other violations such as seatbelts, liquor law violations and DUI drivers.

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Patrol East initiated a project last month to reduce DUI incidents and related offenses. With this exercise, they also hope to increase safety belt and child restraint usage rates. Look for Officers to be passing out educational flyers in the Patrol East Bureau.

Patrol South: Officers will be supplementing the Patrol West efforts to keep Kellogg safe for motorists during the holidays. They will be watching specifically for speeding and aggressive driving violations.

On Nov. 26 Officers will conduct a DUI check lane at 47th St. South and Santa Fe (I135) from 10 p.m. until 2 a.m.

Personnel costs for these special traffic assignments are funded by the Kansas Department of Transportation via a Special Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) grant. For more information on local traffic safety enforcement, please contact Sgt. Jerry Quick at the Patrol West Bureau 337-9400, Sgt. Jim Krok at the Patrol East Bureau 688-9331, Sgt. Donnie Phelps at the Patrol South Bureau 337-9200 or Sgt. Chris McAuliffe at the Patrol North Bureau 688-9500.

Traffic Fatalities	Total thru Oct. 31	Total for year	DUI related
2001	24	29	11
2002	33	35	22
2003	13	19	8
2004	22	24	12
2005	22	23 (thru 11-10)	11